

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 IGA-02  
AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 DHA-02 NSCE-00 SSO-00  
USIE-00 INRE-00 EA-07 EB-08 COME-00 /093 W  
-----041547Z 023160 /45

O P 041405Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2970  
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA  
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L A SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1320

KINSHASA FOR DEPUTY ASST. SECRETARY SEELYE

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR MASS ET US  
SUBJ: EPMG DISPLEASURE OVER MAP TERMINATION

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1133 (NOTAL ), ADDIS ABABA 1176 (NOTAL)

1. ACTING MOFA AMERICA AFFAIRS DIVISION DIRECTOR BEHANE  
DERESSE CALLED ME IN MARCH 4 TO EXPRESS SERIOUS EPMG CON-  
CERN OVER US DECISION TO TERMINATE MILITARY ASSISTANCE  
MATERIL GRANTS AFTER CURRENT FISCAL YEAR AND OVER MANNER  
IN WHICH DECISION WAS CONVEYED TO EPMG. BERHANE INDICATED  
THAT ETHIOPIAN CHARGE IN WAHSINGTON FIRST LEARNED OF DECI-  
SION FROM NEWSPAPER. HE WAS ALSO UNDER MISTAKEN IMPRESSION  
THAT AMB. SEELYE'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO ACTING FONMIN HAD BEEN  
MADE AFTER NEWS HAD BECOME KNOWN IN WASHINGTON, BUT I  
CORRECTED HIM ON THAT POINT. BERHANE SAID MAP DICSION  
HAD COME AT TIME WHEN EPMG FOUND ITSELF IN DIFFICULT  
SITUATION AND WAS FORCED TO TAKE NECESSARY MEASURES  
TO SAFEGUARD ITS SECURITY. BERHANE SAID HIS COMMENTS  
SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ONLY PRELIMINARY EXCHNAGE OF  
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VIEWS AND THAT SUBJECT WOULD LIKELY BE TAKEN UP AT  
HIGHER LEVEL LATER. MEANWHILE HE HOPED US WOULD RE-  
FLECT SERIOUSLY ON GENERAL MATTER OF BILATERAL ARMS  
RELATIONSHIP, SHINCE OTHER EPMG ARMAMENT REQUESTS WERE  
IN PIPELINE AND EPMG WOULD WANT CLEAR INDICATION AS  
TO IMPLICATIONS OF MAP DECISON ON FUTURE FLOW OF  
WEAPONS. IN HIS VIEW IT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO SAY IN

GENERAL TERMS, AS SEELYE HAD DONE, THAT MILITARY CREDITS WERE STILL AVAILABLE AND MILITARY SALES WOULD CONTINUE. EPMG WANTED TO KNOW WHERE IT STOOD.

2. BEHANE ALSO SAID HE HAD BEEN ASKED BY ACTING FONMIN TO EXPRESS EPMG CONCERN OVER MREMARKS EXPRESSED BY US OFFICIALS TOPRESS IN CONNECTION WITH MAP DECISION. THESE REMARKS REFLECTED ADVERSELY UPON PURPOSES OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION AND HAD BEEN PICKED UP AND BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION BY US MEDIA, CAUSING WORLD TO BE MISINFORMED AS TO TRUE PICTURE OF EVENTS IN ETHIOPIA. FROM CONVERSATIONS IN PAST WITH US AMBASSADOR AND OTHERS, HE HAD GAINED IMPRESION THAT USG BASICALLY ACCEPTED NEED FOR CHANGE IN ETHIOPIA AND WOULD NOT STAND IN WAY OF PROGRESS. NEVERTHELESS, NEWS MEDIA HAD BEEN CONSISTENTLY UNCOMPLIMENTARY, AND WHEN NEWS REPORTS REFLECTED NEGATIVE VIEWS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, RESULT COULD BE VERY SERIOUS. (WHEN PRESSED, HE ADMITTED HE WAS REFERRING PRIMARILY TO SECRETARY'S REFERNECE TO HUMAN RIGHTS ON FEB. 24.)

3. RETURNING TO MAP DICSION, BEHANE EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT MATTER WAS HANDLED THE WAY IT WAS IWTHOUT ADVANCE NOTICE. ACTING FONMIN HAD SPELLED OUT EPMG POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN FEB. 24 CONVERSATION WITH SEELYE, AND ONE MUST REMEMBER THAT

REVOLUTION STILL GOING ON, SOME PEOPLE HAD LOST PROPERTY AND TAKEN UP ARMS AGAINST GOVERNMENT, HENCE CONFIDENTIAL

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CERTAIN UNAVOIDABLE MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN TO SECURE SITUATIO, EPMG NOT CONVINCED THAT US POSITION TAKEN PURELY ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS, SINCE ONLY FEW COUNTRIES HAD BEEN SINGLED OUT, WHEREAS US RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND KOREA WERE MORE THAN FRIENDLY, DESPITE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS THERE.

4. I REMINDED BERHANE THAT THERE WERE TWO REASONS FOR MAP DECISION. GRANT TERMINATION WAS PART OF CUTBACK ON BLOBAL BASIS AND NEW US ADMINISTRATION HAD ALREADY EXPRESSED CONCERN FREQUENTLY ABOUT MAGNITUDE OF ARMS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AROUND THE WORLD. SECOND REASON WAS OF COURSE CONCERN OVER HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS. BEHANE SEEMED TO BE SUGGESTING THAT THERE WERE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, AND I WANTED TO ASSURE HIM THAT I KNEW OF NONE.

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

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AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 DHA-02 EA-07 EB-08 COME-00 /093 W

-----041546Z 022889 /45

O P 041405Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2971

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1320

KINSHASA FOR DEPUTY ASSIST. SECRETARY SEELYE

ALTHOUGH GRANTS HAD BEEN TERMINATED, MILITARY CREDITS WERE INDEED STILL AVAILABLE, AS WERE CASH PURCHASES, WHICH HAD REPRESENTED BULK OF TRANSACTIONS IN RECENT YEARS. MOREOVER, MAP TERMINATION NOT EFFECTIVE UNTIL OCT. 1, AND DECISION WOULD NOT AFFECT GRANT EQUIPMENT ALREADY IN PIPELINE, DELIVERIES OF WHICH WOULD CONTINUE OVER NEXT SEVERAL YEARS. THUS, THERE WOULD BE NO SLOWDOWN IN GOODS ALREADY CONTRACTED FOR, ALTHOUGH NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET WOULD BE AFFECTED.

5. I REMINDED BERHANE THAT US HAD NO ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICA, AND THAT WE WERE ON PUBLIC RECORD AS VIGOROUSLY CONDEMNING ITS SOCIAL SYSTEM. SEELYE HAD INDICATED TO ACTING FONMIN THAT MANY DOMESTIC MEASURES UNDERTAKEN BY EPMG HAD EVOKED GREAT SYMPATHY IN U.S. WITH REGARD TO MEDIA I SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF ETHIOPIANS WOULD GIVE FOREIGN REPORTERS MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO OBTAIN BALANCED PICTURE OF EVENTS IN THIS COUNTRY AND RE-CONFIDENTIAL

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MINDED BERHANE THAT USG HAD NO CONTROL OVER US PRESS.

6. SUMMING UP, BERHANE SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND MAP

TERMINATION DECISION BASED ON GLOBAL CONSIDERATIONS, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THIS RATIONALE WAS NOT IN ACCORD WITH PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON DECISIONS ATTRIBUTED TO SECRETARY OF STATE. WHEN ETHIOPIA WAS SINGLED OUT IN SUCH A DRAMATIC WAY, GLOBAL CONSIDERATIONS BECAME ACADEMIC. HE HAD MENTIONED SOUTH AFRICA NOT IN MILITARY TERMS, BUT RATHER AS ILLUSTRATION THAT A RIGID US HUMAN RIGHTS STAND AFFECTING ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP THERE WOULD HAVE HAD BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON WORLD OPINION. ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH KOREA WAS ALSO CONTINUING. HENCE, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT STATEMENTS THAT MAP DECISION BASED PURELY ON HUMANITARIAN HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS. MEANS BY WHICH DECISION WAS PRESENTED DID NOT APPEAR IN INTEREST OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS BOTH SIDES WANT TO MAINTAIN. NEVERTHELESS, BERHANE SAID HE WOULD CONVEY TO ACTING FONMIN AND OTHERS FACT THAT USG LOOKED FAVORABLY ON MANY INTERNAL ETHIOPIAN MEASURES.

7. TAKING NOTE OF MY REMINDER THAT US PRESS WAS INDEPENDENT AND NOT LIKELY TO REACT TO USG SUGGESTIONS ON HANDLING NEWS, BERHANE UNDERLINED THAT FACED WITH UNFRIENDLY NEWS MEDIA REPORTAGE FROM ABROAD, IT WOULD HARDLY BE POSSIBLE FOR EPMG TO ASK ETHIOPIAN PRESS NOT TO ANSWER. PAST EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE UNFRIENDLY REFERENCES TO US IN MEDIA WOULD THUS BE SPOILED, AND THIS WOULD OF COURSE HAVE CONSEQUENCES.

8. COMMENT: BERHANE WAS ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS AND RATHER UNCOMFORTABLE. WHETHER MATTER WILL EVER BE ESCALATED TO "HIGHER LEVELS" (THERE ARE ONLY TWO-- FONMIN HIMSELF OR PMAC CHAIRMAN) WILL PROBABLY DEPEND UPON NATURE OF OUR RESPONSE, SPECIFICALLY WHAT  
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WE ARE GOING TO DO ABOUT LARGE WAR RESERVE AMMO REQUEST, AND TWO OTHER LESSER REQUESTS FOR AMMO AND HELICOPTERS. SINCE MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS STILL AT HEART OF OUR RELATIONSHIP HERE GIVEN PRE-OCCUPATION OF EPMG WITH SECURITY MATTERS, WE CAN EXPECT THAT FAILURE TO BE RESPONSIVE WILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS THAT OTHER FORMS OF HELP, SUCH AS ECONOMIC, ARE NOT LIKELY TO OVERCOME, AT LEAST IN SHORT RUN. BERHANE CLEARLY EXPECTS A RESPONSE FROM US SINCE I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD OF COURSE RELAY VIEWS HE EXPRESSED TO WASHINGTON. I WOULD THEREFORE BE GRATEFUL FOR DEPT'S INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHAT I MIGHT SAY IN REPLY. WHETHER EPMG DECIDES TO PUBLISH SOMETHING AS SUGGESTED BY BERHANE REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IF THEY DO, HOWEVER, IT NOT LIKELY BE HELPFUL. END COMMENT.

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## Message Attributes

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